Roy Hunt's

FU MANCHU and company

a folio with remarks by the artist

introduction by Irving L. Jaffee

author of Elementary My Dear Watson

collector's edition

SAX ROHMER: An Appreciation

Solar Pons had his Baron Von Ruber to contend with, Sherlock Holmes hod the elusive Professor Moriarty to wrestle with, but nowhere in the iconography of the detective story was there ever a villain to match the ubiquitous Dr. Fu Manchu. Many of us who were around in the thirties remember well the exotic tales of the sinister Doctor which relieved us of some of the burden of those dark days. In all probability, our recollection of him is of an unpleasant Oriental with a drooping moustache and extremely long fingernails. But was Fu really as bad as he was painted?

If we turn to the pages of the novel, The Mask of Fu Manchu, written about that time, some twenty years after the inception of this character, we read a description of him which might change our opinion somewhat:

'He wore a green robe upon which was embroidered a white peacock, and on the dome of his wonderful skull a little cap was perched-o block cap surmounted by a coral ball. The door slid silently to behind him, and he stood watching me. . .

'He carried no stick; his long, bony hands were folded upon his breast. He was drawn up to his full, gaunt height, which I judged to be over six feet. His eyes, which were green as the eyes of a leopard, fixed me with a glance so piercing that it extended my powers to the full to sustain it.

'There ore few really first-class brains in the world to-day, but no man with any experience of humanity, looking in those long brilliant eyes, could have doubted that he stood in the presence of a supermind.'

This certainly seems a more flattering portrait than we had been led to believe before. Moreover there ore many tributes scattered about the book which pay homage to his high sense of values! More than once Nayland Smith of Scotland Yard or Shan Greville, the young Orientalist, make comments to the effect that his word is his bond. Indeed, as the story progresses, developing the hunt for the precious relics of the Veiled Prophet in the Middle East, we find that he consistently adheres to the code of a gentleman, though the Occidentals in the story often stooped to baser tactics to regain the lost treasure.

Conan Doyle must have identified with his hero, Sherlock Holmes, and Ian Fleming must have fancied himself as James Bond sometimes rather than the invisible Dr. No, but Sax Rohmer seems to hove identified, if anything, with his arch villain, Dr. Fu Manchu. And yet this is not so strange when we come to realize that the old mandarin personified for him all the lore and enchantment of the Eastwhich he so long hod a fondness for. In most of his stories, the protagonist is generally someone rather youngish and who is particularly susceptible to the influence of the Far East. In this case, it is Shan Greville, and he is very often dominated by the almost hypnotic spell of the old mandarin and his daughter. At one point, when he hos been drugged and captured by the old magician, he soys: 'I rejoiced that I was to serve Fu Manchu.' His love of Egypt, where most of this story takes place, is graphically described in these few sentences: 'Those words "our Egypt" quickened my pulse. It was in Egypt that I me+ her, and in Egypt that I had learned to love her. . .' He is speaking here too of his fiancee, the lovely Rima, niece of Sir Lionel Barton, the famed Egyptian archeologist.

Actually, we have caricatured Fu Manchu over the years, but Sax Rohmer never caricatures him. To him, the wily old Oriental possessed all the innate fascination of things Asiatic that attracted him, and these things were also present, perhaps even more so, in the person of his daughter, the lovely Fah Lo Suee. When Greville encounters either of them-whether it be in Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo, a house in London or even in the British Museum-when they summon him, he must follow. Usually his meetings with them are in a dreamlike state-probably induced by drugs-and he seems to be happy to be completely in their power.

Where did Fu Manchu come from? Was he related to the famed Manchu Dynasty? It is possible. Since he claims to possess a secret elixir which could prolong life, he may have been well over 125 years of age. He may have then been related to the amazing Tzu Hoi, the famous Empress who ruled China for almost forty years as the lost of her line. Like him, the Dowager Empress possessed many attributes of uncommon intelligence and great charm which enabled her to ascend to the throne from comparatively humble beginnings.

It was she who governed China during the great Boxer Rebellion and had a lot to do with stirring up the agitation against the 'foreigners' as they called the Europeans in those days. The Rebellion was put down on August 14, 1900 by th e arrival of fresh troops almost at the last minute and Chino was forced to pay indemnities in the hundreds of millions of dollars. But the United States, with a characteristic humanitarian gesture, nullified the debt; and in grateful recognition of the stature of this emerging world power, the Chinese put the money into scholarships for their young students to come to America and, in a curious reversal of the old saying, 'Learn of the wisdom of the West.'

Sax Rohmer was born in 1883 of Irish parents; his father come from Wicklow and his mother from Athlone, 'where the River Shannon flowed.' His real name was Arthur Sarsfield Word ond he was steeped in Egyptology from his earliest days. Later on he switched his affections to the Far East, but he always hod a passion for both. He was educated in England and took a whirl at journalism in London, but his stories soon brought him great fame. The novels about Fu Manchu soon gathered momentum and for the next thirty or forty years the printing presses hummed ond millions of readers waited expectantly for the next adventure of the Chinese escape artist who threatened for a time to toke over the mastery of the world from the Limehouse ghetto from whence he hod sprung!

He retired ultimately, in his mid seventies, to the peace and quiet of suburban White Plains-a far cry from the temple bells and rickshaws of ancient China which he always loved.

Sax Rohmer wrote with a swift narrative style that carried the reader along in a wave of color and suspense. We defy the ordinary reader to put down the book we hove mentioned after reading a chapter entitled 'The Flying Death,' where a shapeless dark form slips over the windowsill of Greville's room one night and leans over the motionless form of a sleeping man! This is one of Fu Manchu's secret agents still seeking to retrieve the treasure.

This passage gives on idea of how the author could sketch in with quick brush strokes a glowing word picture of the Cairo streets: 'Our pilot had just tricked sunset, and we drove on amid the swift, violet, ever changing dusk; dodging familiar native groups; a donkey-rider now ond then-with villas shrinking right ond left into the shadows, ond dusty palms beginning to assume on oppeoronce of silhouettes against thot sky which is the roof of Egypt.'

The redoubtable Nayland Smith ond Dr. Petrie become, after a while, pallid representations of the C.I.D. Commissioner and his medical assistant; but Fu Manchu and his alluring young daughter endure and even develop into symbols of the Old China–occult ond full of intrigue. Fah Lo Suee possessed, in a lesser degree, many of her father's uncanny gifts, but added to this were her charm and haunting beauty and these were so strong as to almost engulf Shan Greville-so much so that he almost foiled to show up on his wedding day, devoted as he was to his lovely Rima.[1]

It was she who called him away ot the lost when he guarded the precious relics of the Masked Prophet-o diamond-studded sword, a golden mask, and the precious plates bearing the text of the New Koran. And so they were lost for all time to the West to the wizard doctor, having changed hands mony times, through many tricks, during the course of the story. The great prophet who was to appear never materialized and whether Fu Monchu returned the precious relics to the Islamic sect or kept them for himself will never be known; but suffice to soy although he could not be considered a benefactor of the human race, we hope we hove changed his image slightly from that of a diabolical fiend to a man of honor and one with a low opinion of commercialism.

The sweet scent of mimosa fills the air. The night is brimming with stars. Out of t h e shadows–'Shan Shan.' The voice is low, soft and melodious. It is the voice of Fah Lo Suee calling to Greville once again. Once again it is as if he were drugged-drugged with the mysterious potions of the Far East-and he finds himself once more unable to resist that call. He has no other course but to follow. And so it was with Sax Rohmer; a voice sweet, subtle, ond caressing called to him; it was the voice of the mysterious East, and he was completely in its thrall and there was no other course left to him but to surrender to it. And so when we read this story of the Masked Prophet-or any of the other stories-we too are brought under the some mystic spell for a while as was their creator all his life. And we too must succumb to the sorcery and blandishments of the East as embodied in his most famous character-a mon who never could have lived-the fantastic and incredible Dr. Fu Manchu!

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[1] The wedding did indeed toke place and proved to be one of the more glittering social events of the London season. The shy Greville, who always shunned the limelight, feebly protested, but the bull-dozing Sir Lionel overrode all his objections and it seemed that all of Moyfoir turned out for the occasion.

Greville's wounded feelings were to be salved, too, first by Rima, of course, and then by a package and note that arrived on the wedding day. The package contoined a string of priceless pearls-a present for the bride-from none other than the so-called 'Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu,' and the note bode Greville not to blame himself for the loss of the authentic relics.

cf.: The Mask of Fu Manchu, the very lost page.

Notes by the Artist

PICTURE ONE: The screen's first Fu Manchu, Warner Oland. In 1929 he starred in The Mysterious Dr. Fu-Monchu, an all-talking picture. In 1930, this was followed by The Return of Dr. Fu-Monchu, but for some reason was advertised in the newspapers and on the theater marquees as The New Adventures of Dr. Fu-Monchu. The screen title was, however, Return of Dr. Fu-Monchu. In 1931 Warner Olond mode his final appearonce as Fu-Manchu in Daughter of the Dragon, based on the story Daughter of Fu Monchu. (At this point the hyphen is eliminated.) Oland makes a brief appearance ot the beginning ond then dies off, leaving his daughter, played by Anna Moy Wong, to carry on his work. During this period Warner Oland began his Charlie Chan series: Charlie Chan Carries On, 1930; The Block Camel, 1931. It was, at this time, on interchanging of costumes: a Mandarin's cop to a bowler hot; the face remained the some. And as Charlie Chon, he was selected by the wife of Earl Derr Biggers to be Chan. The rest is history.

A water color poster portrait done in greens ond blocks. 24 x 30.

PICTURE TWO: In 1932 Boris Karloff become the second screen's Fu Manchu, and the most sinister, in The Mask of Fu Monchu. His daughter was played by Myrna Loy, who was to gain fame in the Thin Man series. In a movie preview Sax Rohmer himself appears on the screen to comment on the picture. He is shown inscribing a copy of the book to the studio. The picture was more fantastic than the book. Lewis Stone played Nayland Smith.

A water color poster portrait done in greens, yellows, and blocks. 18 x 24.

PICTURE THREE: In 1940 Henry Brandon became Fu Manchu Number Three in The Drums of Fu Monchu. No resemblance to the novel the producers just borrowed the title. Though originally a serial, the first port was feature-length, followed by shorter episodes in the succeeding weeks. Later it was released in condensed form as a feature-length movie. The opening ports were laid in San Francisco. The scene depicted is a composite of several scenes combining them into a whole. Fu Manchu's daughter was played by Gloria Franklin. Dacoits in the background.

A water color acrylic pointing in block and white. 18 x 24.

PICTURE FOUR: Christopher Lee was Fu Monchu Number Four in The Face of Fu Monchu, made in England in 1965. It was the first time the Doctor appeared in color. Nigel Green mode a good Naylond Smith, close to Rohmer's description. The blackened briar pipe was missed. Lee also mode Brides of Fu Manchu and Vengeance of Fu Monchu, ond has played Dracula and Sherlock Holmes.

Color oil. 18 x 24.

PICTURE FIVE: This is Nayland Smith, the true Scotland Yard Inspector, or C.I.D. Commissioner, or what have you. Or, perhaps, on detached duty. His name and mannerisms speok authority. With the true zest for adventure that inheres in the British, he stands firm ond resolute in his fight against Fu Monchu, would-be conqueror of the world. Yet Naylond Smith never did quite subdue him; but we have followed his adventures with great interest through the years, thrilling to his constant struggle with the ageless doctor. In fact, he was lucky to get off alive himself. And in the final novel, Emperor Fu Monchu, laid in Chino, they have a common bond -the fight against Communism.

Color oil. 18 x 24.

PICTURE SIX: Fu Manchu's Daughter. She was first introduced to us in the third volume of the series, Hand of Fu Monchu. And after a lapse of mony years come into prominence in the Collier Magazine serial, Fu Manchu's Daughter, 1930. And in the some year was a radio serialization of the story. Fortunate were those who hod a loud speaker in place of a crystal set. In the book her name is Foh Lo Suee; she hod an irresistible charm. But when she was disobedient, her stern, proud father was not bashful with the whip. This painting was based on Poulet Tu, who played in The Face of Fu Manchu, but not as his daughter.

Color oil. 18 x 24.

PICTURE SEVEN: Moris Klaw, The Dream Detective. He is on antique dealer. He is assisted by his attractive daughter, Isis. He has a gray parrot who announces to the visitor 'The Devil has come for you, Moris Klaw.' Klaw is a student of crime. Lying down and sleeping at the scene of a crime, he is able to absorb the atmosphere of the criminal act, which enables him to point the finger at the guilty party.

Color oil. 16 x 20.

PICTURE EIGHT: Anthony Ferraro, Brood of the Witch Queen, and sorcerer extraordinary. This scene depicts him in a necromantic operation in a secret chamber of the Meydum Pyramid.

Color oil. 16 x 20.

PICTURE NINE: Fo-Hi, The Golden Scorpion, along with Fu Monchu-unnamed in the story-look over Miska, the slave girl, who has been chosen to be an agent of Fo-Hi to help him in his future criminal activities. In the book Miska is standing before Fa-Hi; for the sake of composition, she is seated upon a divan. The pointing is bright with color: reds, yellows, and blue-greens dominating.

Color oil. 18 x 24.

PICTURE TEN: Chief Inspector Red Kerry. Featured in Dope; Yellow Shadows; and in two short stories in Tales of Chinatown: The Daughter of Huang Chow and Kerry's Kid. One of Rohmer's most interesting characters, he is built an the lines of a whippet, medium height, muscular, red short hair and mustache, red complexion, and chews gum incessantly. He is very sarcastic to his subordinates. His favorite expression: 'Who's the smart?' He wears his bowler hot at a rakish angle. The background of Limehouse does not look this good.

Color oil. 18 x 24.

PICTURE ELEVEN: Sir Lionel Barton and Niece Rima. An interesting study of the indomitable Sir Lionel. I remember him as a kind of Colonel Blimp, but with strong overtones of great scholarship in Middle-Eastern affairs. His tactics for charging-in as well as a challenging yen for archaeology often resulted in precipitous action which would get the party into serious trouble with the age-old scientist, Fu Monchu. Rima and Shan Granville were the romantic leads in Fu Manchu's Daughter and Mask of Fu Manchu, 1931-1932.

Color oil. 16 x 20.

PICTURE TWELVE: Yu'an Hee See. Here is one of Rohmer's most villainous characters, who, unlike Fu Monchu, is without honour; kills off people indiscriminately in shark-ridden waters. He is the Marquis Yu'an Hee See, who, in his early years, received a bullet in his throat during a political escapade, resulting in his talking in a high-pitched voice and laughing in a squeal terrifying to his subordinates. He is a large heavy man of lemon-yellow complexion, slick black hair, full red lips, and a mustache forming a bow. Yu'on Hee See Laughs was serialized in Collier's Magazine in 1931 and dramatized on radio as a weekly serial on the Collier's hour. This does not mean it lasted a whole hour – about fifteen minutes a week along with other Collier varieties. In the text Yu'on Hee See is deftly foded out; in fact, one has to go back in the book to find out at what point he does escape. In the radio drama it is explained more fully; and, as the commentator stated, Sax Rohmer wanted to write more stories about Yu'an it never came to pass but those who heard it still remember the high bat-like laughter of Yu'an Hee See.

Color oil. 18 x 24.

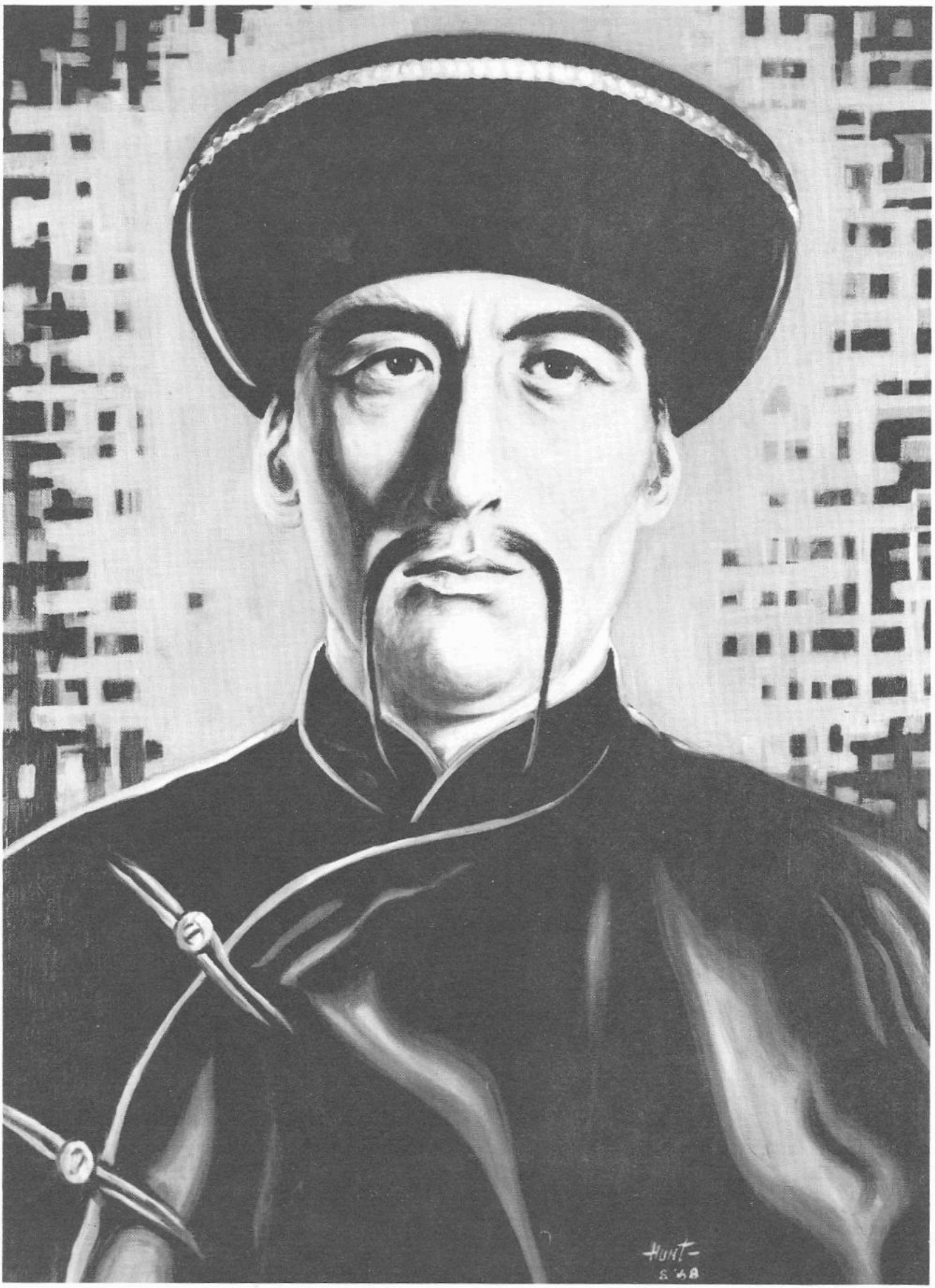
PICTURE THIRTEEN: This is the real Dr. Fu Monchu as described by Rohmer throughout the thirteen novels beginning with The Insidious Dr. Fu Monchu, 1913, and ending with Emperor Fu Monchu, 1959. His features remind one of the Egyptian Pharaoh, Seti I. (The lower part of the face was based on a photo of Seti I.) Add th e 'brow of Shakespeare, and a face like Satan,' long green emerald eyes with their chatoyant quality (shining like a cat's) and you hove the picture. He is toll and high-shoulde red, and usually dresses in a long yellow robe, but in Mask of Fu Manchu his robe is black with a silvered peacock embroidered on the front. He wears a black cap an his dome-like head. Unlike his movie counterparts, he has no mustache. And nowhere in all the stories is he described as having one; and, it would be in the way of his disguises. Philo Vance and Charlie Chan hod no face shrubbery in the original stories, but movie makers of that period had to have it . . mode them look more formidable, or comical, as the case may be; at least they didn't look blond. (Imagine Groucho Marx without his mustache.) Two illustrators, Flanagan of old Collier's Magazine and the cover illustrator for Fu Manchu and the Panama Canal, created Fu Manchu about the way he really looked. Fu Manchu. lives on. Sox Rohmer seemed to hear a sibilant voice saying, 'It is your belief that you hove made me; it is mine that I shall live when you are smoke.'

Color oil. 18 x 24

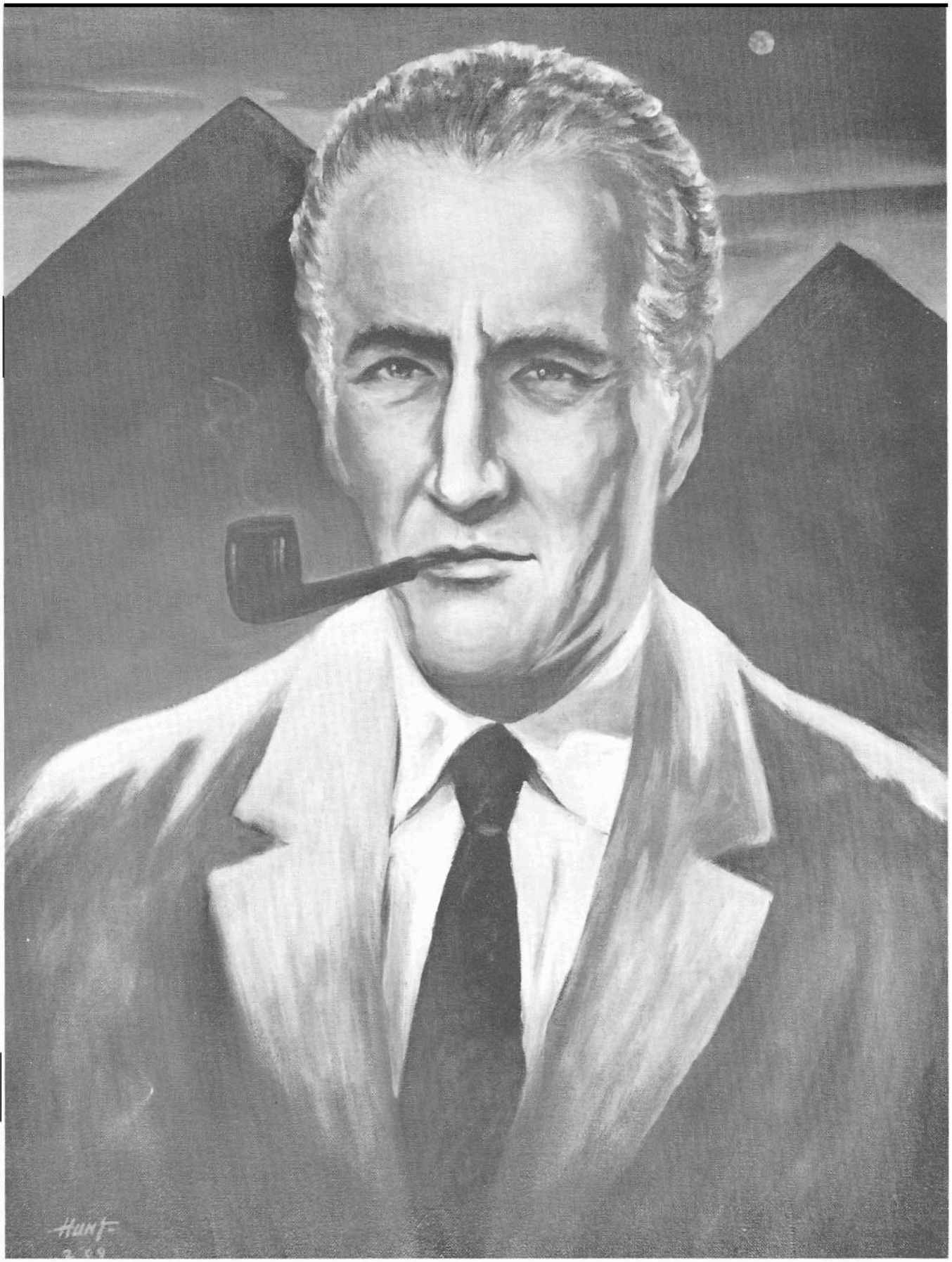
1. The screen's first Fu Manchu, **Warner** Oland.

2. Boris Karloff, **the screen's second** Fu Manchu.

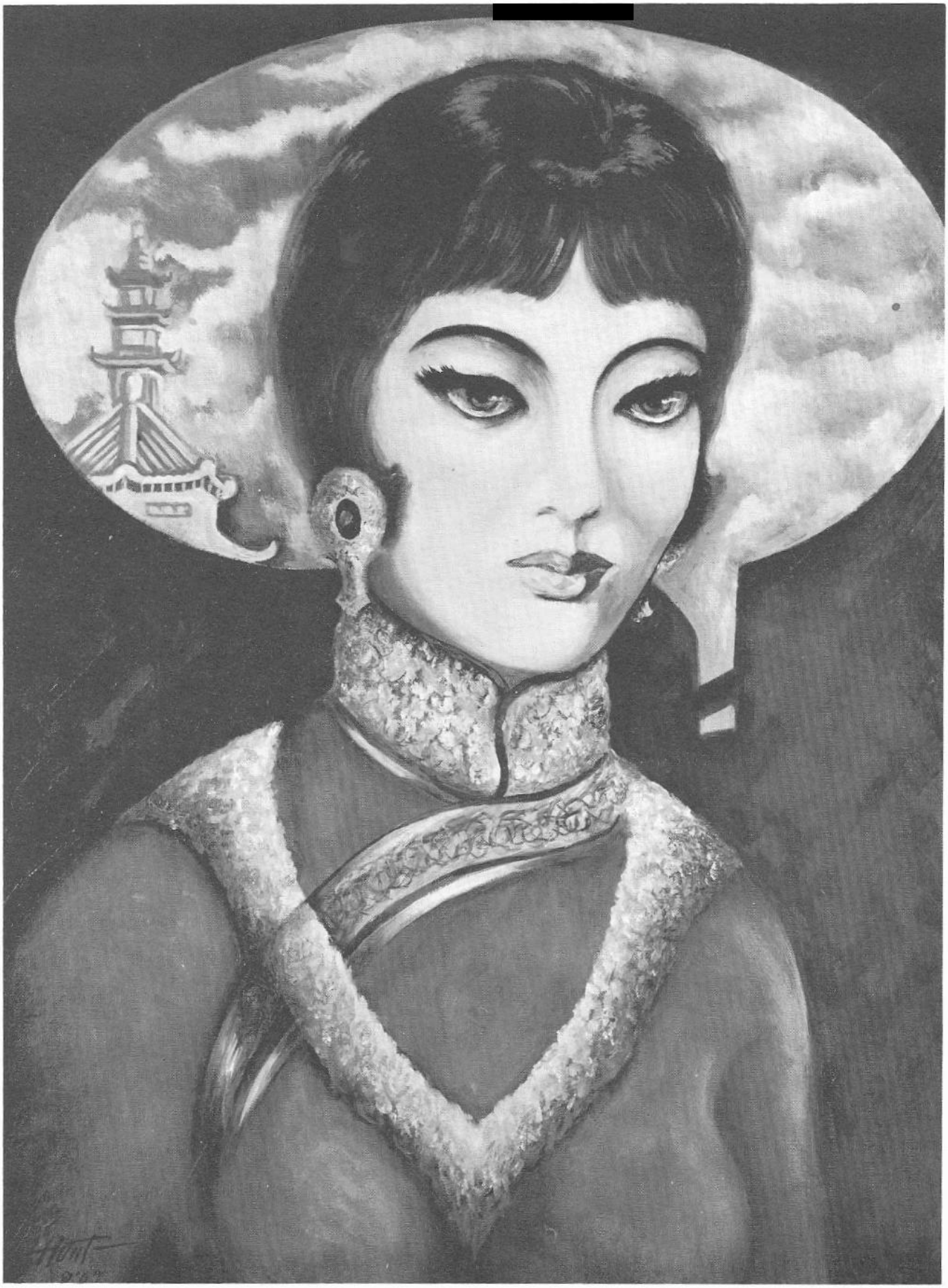
3. Henry Brandon, **the screen's third** Fu Manchu



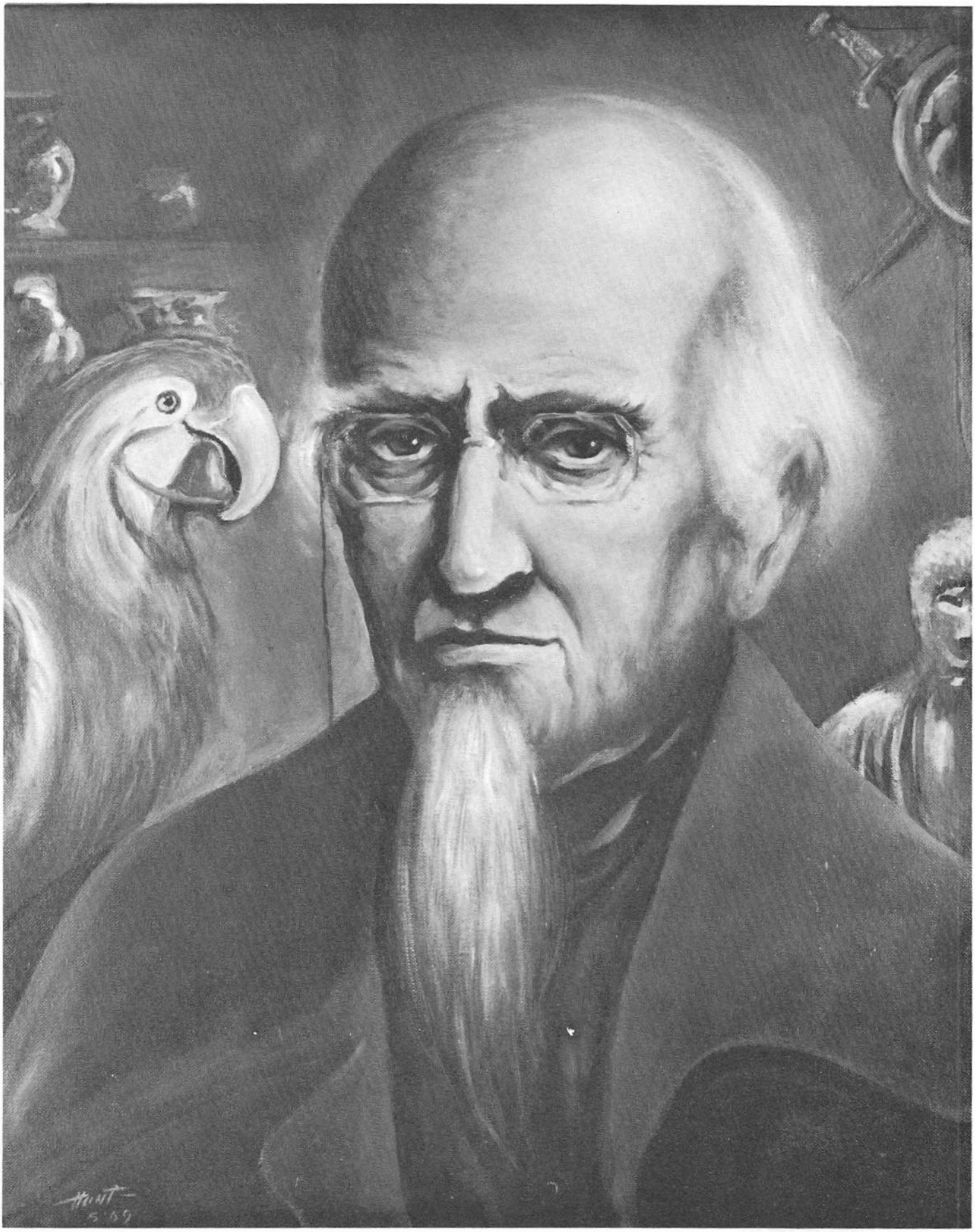
4. Christopher Lee, the screen's fourth Fu Manchu.



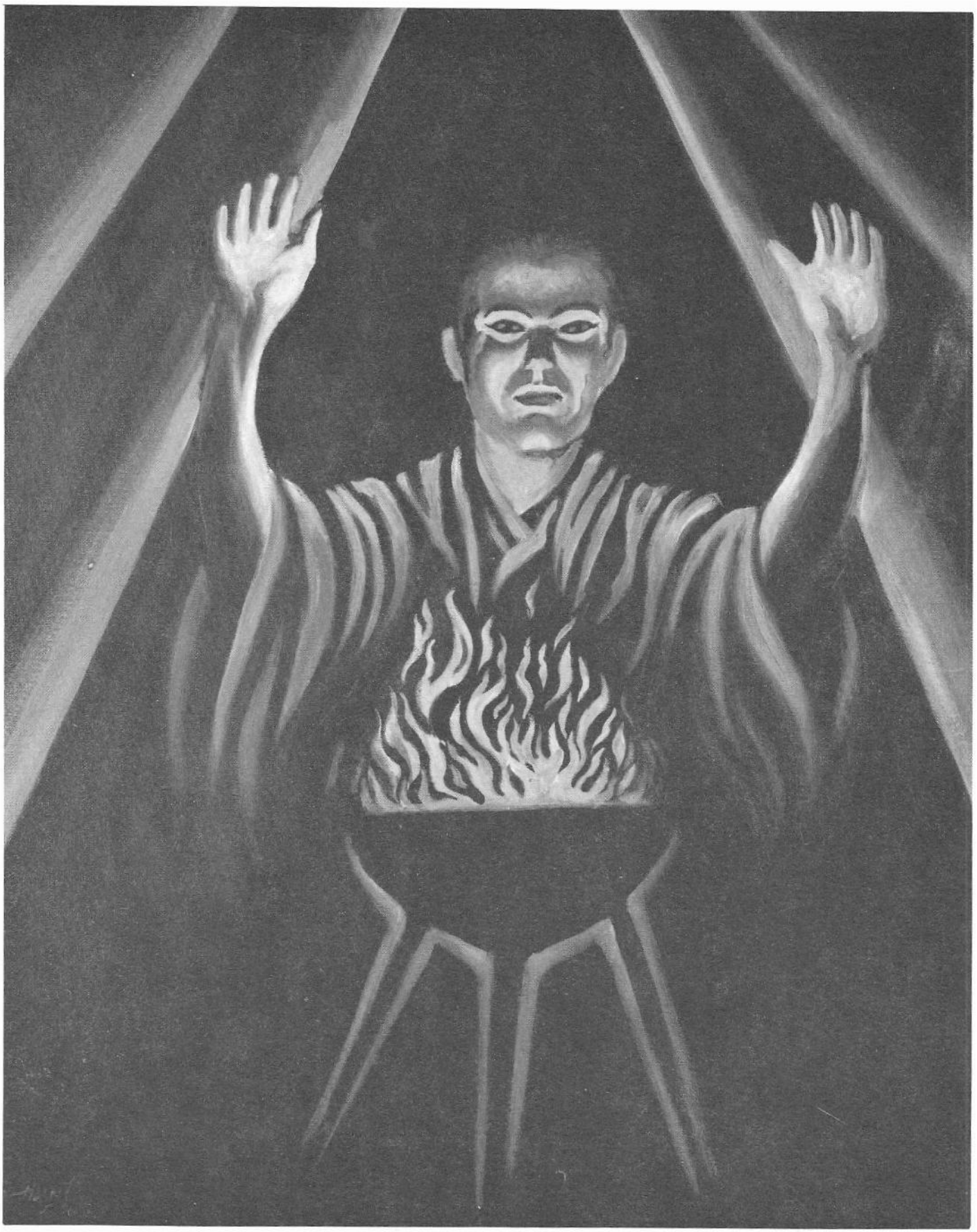
5. " **'There is only one** Nayland **Smith-** .' "
Dr. Fu Manchu, **Re.Enter** Fu Manchu.



6. " 'Love dreams ore so bitter-sweet because we know we are dreaming. "
Fah Lo Suee, The Mask of Fu Manchu.



7"'I am here, the old curious, and find myself in delightful company."'
Moris Klaw, The Dream Detective.



8. "'With Antony Ferrara's **Compliments.**' "
Brood of the Witch Queen.

9. **"This,"** said **Fo-Hi, "is** Miska."
The Golden Scorpion.

10. " 'Chief Inspector Kerry is my name.' "
Kerry's Kid.

11. "'If you're going to work with me in the future, you'll either have to chuck Rimo or marry her!"'
Sir Lionel Barton, Daughter of Fu Manchu.

12. " 'A beautiful woman is a jewel, but a jewel may sometimes scratch its wearer.' "
The Marquis Yu'an Hee See, Yu'an Hee See Laughs.

13. " 'This is the sort of atmosphere in which Doctor Fu Manchu finds himself at home!' "
Sir Denis Nayland Smith, The Drums of Fu Manchu.

this folio respectfully dedicated to
THE SAX ROHMER SOCIETY

credits:

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